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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION

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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Bush warns Erdogan: Our patience running out - Sabah  
Bush demands air corridor fast - Milliyet  
Bush to Erdogan: Delay means 'No' - Vatan  
Cheney calls Ankara, tension rising - Hurriyet  
U.S. to GOT: Enough already! - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Bush: Open up air space, Erdogan: Not without the parliament  
- Radikal  
Harsh Bush letter almost broke ties w/U.S. - Zaman  
UN, Ankara against war; Bush cornered - Yeni Safak  
End of UN road for U.S. - Radikal  
The end for HADEP - Cumhuriyet

FINANCIAL JOURNALS

OECD: Turkey to grow 5.7 percent in 5 years - Dunya  
950 to attend Turkey, U.S. Business Council Conference -  
Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Iraq: In a letter to AKP leader Erdogan, President Bush warned Turkey to refrain from unilateral action in northern Iraq, and urged him to open Turkish airspace to the U.S. Vice President Cheney called Erdogan on Thursday, telling him to speed up the decision mechanism regarding deployment of troops. Erdogan did not make any commitment on the troop deployment issue, and said it would be taken up after the new cabinet is formed. Erdogan reminded VP Cheney of the Turks' sensitivities, and admitted that the government would not be able to survive a second defeat of the resolution in parliament. With hopes to get a new UNSC resolution gradually fading, reports suggest that the Washington Administration has stepped up pressure on Ankara. Cheney, impatient for an immediate response regarding the use of a Turkish air corridor, was not happy with Erdogan's response, according to today's press. Papers expect Erdogan to present his cabinet list to President Sezer for approval on Friday. The new government program will be discussed in the parliament on Tuesday, and the vote of confidence will be sought on Thursday, March 20. Some reports suggest that the government could submit a second decree for troop deployment to the parliament as early as March 21.

Court closed pro-Kurdish HADEP: The Constitutional Court has banned pro-Kurdish HADEP (People's Democracy Party) for allegedly providing support to terrorist activities. The Court's justification claimed that HADEP has provided 'concrete support' to the terrorist PKK, and ruled that 46 party members, including chairman Murat Bozlak, are barred from politics for five years. Chief Prosecutor Kanadoglu has also filed a case for the closure of DEHAP, a party regarded as the 'continuation' of HADEP. The HADEP leadership has denounced the court's decision as a 'political massacre,' and the party is expected to appeal to the ECHR. "Yeni Safak" notes that the closure decision for HADEP came immediately after the ECHR ruling calling for the retrial of PKK leader Ocalan. The paper sees the

development as another instance of Turkey's defiance of Europe.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

1. Post Djindjic assassination in Serbia and the Balkans
2. Iraq and US-Turkey relations

"Djindjic was victimized by foreign intervention"  
Feraï Tinc commented on the assassination of the Serbian leader in mass appeal Hurriyet (3/14): "Djindjic was killed on the eve of a meeting to shape Kosovo's future structure. Although a decade has already gone by, the process of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia has not yet been concluded. Djindjic was one of the victims of the 'divide and restructure' process. . Djindjic had found himself trapped between his efforts to clean out the country's underworld figures and organizations on the one hand, and foreign pressure about Kosovo on the other. The internal situation also did not help him, as some ultra nationalist movements continued to flourish at a time of economic difficulty. The demise of Djindjic opens a new page in the Balkans story. It also shows that none of the Balkan-related problems, including Bosnia, has been resolved."

"Bush pressures; Erdogan resists"  
Murat Yetkin commented in the liberal-intellectual Radikal (3/14): "President Bush sent a letter to AKP leader Erdogan which, in fact, was an ultimatum about Iraq wrapped in diplomatic courtesy. Yet Erdogan, with the help of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, studied the ultimatum as two separate parts. The decision is to continue cooperation between Turkey and the US, but to decline, for the moment, the request for permission to open Turkish airspace for US air strikes. Erdogan believes that neither the political nor the legal framework is ready for requesting this permission from the parliament. The parliament authorization will be initiated as soon as the new government is formed, and right after it receives the vote of confidence. . Nobody can possibly predict where this is going to go. But one thing is clear: Washington is increasing the pressure, and Ankara continues to resist."

PEARSON